

February 9, 1980

Dr. M.N. Rothbard
4341 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94306

Dear Dr. Rothbard:

I am amazed by the hypocrisy of your article "The Menace of Opportunism" (in the November-December 1979 issue of Libertarian Forum (sic)*. In my opinion it is hypocrisy to publish an article posing as a plea for honesty and open discussion of ideological questions when you fail to mention the source of the idea -- "left opportunism". Having received your so-called** "November-December" issue of LF in late January of 1980, I find it interesting that as late as in your letter to me of May 12, 1979 you were still dichotomizing between "the twin pitfalls of 'left sectarianism' and 'right opportunism'" (emphasis mine). Obviously, you had not discovered the significant difference between 'left sectarianism' and 'left opportunism' or you would have not employed an asymmetrical parallel without some qualification. No, you were still naively using left sectarianism-right opportunism as a symmetrical parallelism. My suspicion is that you failed to understand the problem until you read my work and then decided to coopt and pre-empt a relatively unknown author. By robbing me of recognition you could hope to reduce my impact on the movement which is directly negative to your statement.

Your hypocrisy shades into active dishonesty when it is understood that the term "left opportunism" was first employed in the context of an open letter charging you and your organization (the so-called "Radical Caucus of the Libertarian Party") of serious acts of political opportunism.

This open letter which was sent to you in early November and many other libertarian personages and institutions clearly indicted the RCLP for the blatant opportunism (i.e., forsaking principle for the sake of momentary advantage) or rejecting any consideration of an abolitionism plank authored by the Political Action Caucus. If this were not enough for you, the open letter charges you with serious errors of judgement and breaches of ideology. Permit me to refresh your memory with a quote from the Versus State Newsletter:

First you abdicated on the questions of moral theory before the Philadelphia Society in March. Now you find yourself as a mouth-piece for minimal statism...The abandonment of moral theory has been accompanied by the abandonment of a consistent and courageous ideology. Just as you chose to abdicate on atheism and rational

*After years of reading LF, I see no sign that it is a "forum", that is to say a vehicle for comparing different viewpoints. Certainly I have never seen or heard one solicitation for anything we have had to say.

**I say so-called because I suspect you effectively backdated the issue to cover up for future researchers the earlier (and original) use of "left opportunism" in the Versus State Newsletter.

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egoism -- the only authentic underpinnings for natural law -- you have waffled on abolitionism. Your position of moral agnosticism and ideological opportunism has no capacity to inspire anyone to fight back. It provides no epistemological or ethical armament with which to withstand the big lies of altruist-collectivist culture.

It is highly implausible to me that you should permit such charges to go unanswered especially in an essay in which you blithely attack others in matters much less serious and fundamental. This is implausible unless, as we strongly suspect to be the case, you cannot effectively rebut our charges that you and your RCLP willingly sacrificed positions at the core of our ideology, i.e., on whether to challenge the party with an explicit affirmation of abolition and self-defense for the momentary appeasement of conservative-minarchists in control of the LP. Some would say that this is not merely opportunism -- which is after all a product of the unconscious faltering of a poorly integrated personality -- but a calculated act of betrayal.

I am enclosing a copy of the January-February issue of the Versus State Newsletter which includes my latest criticisms of your position as recently taken in the article "Is Liberty Enough" in the December Reason.

Sincerely,



Richard R. Slomon
PO Box 30681
Seattle, WA 98103
(206) 367-1168

Enc.

March 23, 1980

Dear Frontlines,

I have learned in a letter sent out by Richard R. Slomon that Frontlines had promised him an 1,100^{word} essay in which to expound on the doctrine of revolutionary anarcho-capitalism and that, subsequently, you reneged on that promise. He makes the charge that this illustrates the "the cowardice and incompetence of leading libertarian organs" and represents a general pattern of intellectual repression within the movement. In addition to my dismay at Frontlines going back on an explicit promise, I find Slomon's charge to be disturbingly similar to suspicions that have been forming in my own mind about certain elements within the libertarian movement due to several articles that have been published in your own Frontlines.

The machinations of the "Kochtopus" were covered in FL of September 1978; they were then further explored in the November issue of 1979. In that issue Justin Raimondo, formerly of the SLS, makes a number of devastating charges against that organization and others. In that issue he describes a policy on the part of Milton Mueller of threatening the paid personnel with loss of their jobs in order to control their activities within the Party. He then describes as well a threat made to Bill Evers of Inquiry magazine by the Cato leadership to fire him over his open letter to Libertarian Review decrying its energy issue and his open criticism of the SLS's nuclear power stance, a threat that was dropped only when he agreed to relinquish "an active role in the party".

Those events seem to parallel those experienced by Slomon and the Political Action Caucus and described by him in his letter to the State Central Committee of the Libertarian Party of Washington State. In 1977, the organization was denied admission to the Northwest Regional Libertarian Conference by the LPWS Board of Directors except that they submit to a gag rule apparently instigated at the behest of Pat Artz. They were not even allowed to discuss their views in casual conversation! Not too surprisingly, they subsequently rejected participation.

These facts seem to indicate that there are certain libertarians who attempt to use their positions of power to prevail over opposing views, not by reasoned arguments in open debate, but by bureaucratic manipulation behind closed doors. Sadly, Frontlines has apparently decided to join this group.

Although I myself have some reservations about Slomon's work, I nonetheless perceive it to contain cogent criticisms of the libertarian movement and includes arguments which certainly pertain to the proper development of the antistatist movement. For example, on the need for revolution:

If Libertarians are not prepared even to seriously discuss the option to fight for their rights, how do they expect anyone to believe in the efficacy of personal rights defense in a post-statist society?

How can people who wait for their masters to give them back their rights expect to conduct an effective post-statist society even should one fortuitously take place? ...those who live within the laws of the State and plead for its mercy by their obedient unwillingness to revolt will never be able to create institutions necessary for a post-statist society-even when the State is in fact abolished. Their mentality will be that of slaves without masters. ...Freedom can never be given, it must be won!

It seems to me that in view of the fact that Slomon has developed a unique and well thought-out position, FL should grant to Slomon the privilege of presenting his views so as to enable libertarians to ponder as many alternatives as possible. This would fulfill the genuine function of a "front-line" political publication. At the very least Frontlines should stand behind its word.

Finally, the statement of Justin Raimondo quoted in the Nov 1979 issue bears repeating. "The real issue at stake here is of course: how are questions concerning this or that issue to be settled within the libertarian movement? Will the burning issues of our times be debated, struggled out in public, with each side trying to win over as many people as possible to its position by means of rational persuasion? Or will the ideological development of the movement be stunted and aborted by fear, intimidation, and a stultifying bureaucracy?"

Kenneth O. Lee
Seattle, Wash.

Kenneth O. Lee

April 2, 1980

Dear members of the LPWS central committee*,

It has become common knowledge that Richard R. Slomon has sent a letter to the LPWS State Central Committee in which he describes your decision to deny him access to certain party documents and even declaring him an 'enemy of the Party'.

As you may recall, I sat in on the meeting where Maurice Willey mentioned the letter but refused to read it; well, I believe the letter should definitely be made public. I would therefore like to know if you would send me a copy (at my expense). I would also like to be sent a formal copy of the ruling addressed by the letter. I also would like to know what the subcommittee that was formed to study this issue intends to do about it.

What I would like to know is; is the ostracization and censoring of members whose views disagree with yours the official policy of the LPWS-- what is the constitutional basis of your action?

Apparently you have also chosen to deny Slomon basic party documents such as membership forms and the like. Is he a special case or do you intend to extend such treatment to others who do not meet with your approval? (If so, what criteria will determine who they are?)

I would also like to know if you intend to explore this issue with the general party membership. For example, do you intend to print a full account of your action on Slomon's letter in Reason & Liberty? (If not, why not?) I would like to be advised of all the details.

I must say that I find it very objectionable that any party member, particularly a member who has accomplished as much as Slomon has should be denied the most basic party documents. I feel that it definitely violates the libertarian ideal of the free interplay of ideas. Therefore, you may consider this a letter to the editor of R&L as well as to the State Central Committee; I would like the other members of the party to be made aware of it.

In conclusion, unless I receive what I believe to be satisfactory answer to these questions I will feel morally compelled to make my inquiry public in the Libertarian community at large.

Yours in liberty,

Kenneth O. Lee

Kenneth O. Lee

P.S. I would like the names of all the members of the SCC involved in this decision so that I may contact them directly.

*Pat Artz, Maurice Willey, Skip Barron, Jay Palmer, Marc Chaitlin, et. al.

March 5, 1980

TO: THE STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF WASHINGTON STATE.
(Sent in the care of Maurice Willey).

FROM: RICHARD R. SLOMON: INTERIM CHAIRPERSON OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE
AMERICAN ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT.

SUBJECT: RULING OF THE STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF A BLANKET DENIAL OF ISSUANCE OF
ALL LIBERTARIAN PARTY DOCUMENTS TO RICHARD SLOMON AND HIS CONDEMNATION AS
"ENEMY OF THE PARTY".

I wish to address this inquiry, not only to the members of the committee, several of whom I understand abstained from participation in this action, but also to the members of the Party and the libertarian movement at large. It is my understanding as explained by State Chair and committee member Maurice Willey, that on February 16, 1980, a voting majority of the State Central Committee passed a ruling which prohibited in perpetuity any transmission of party documents which I might request and gratuitously branded me as an "enemy of the Party". This ban includes the documents I had requested earlier from Maurice Willey in early February -- a request which met no opposition from the State Chair. These documents are itemized here for clarification: (1) a copy of the present LPWS constitution; (2) a copy of the final draft of the Board of Directors constitution (pre 1978); (3) five copies of the present membership application form, (I and several of my immediate associates were contemplating bringing our membership red-tape up to date to participate in the April convention. As a result I will be denied that possibility). (4) copies of recent issues of the party newsletter, Reason and Liberty, during 1979; (5) copies of several letters written as public information admonishing the Chair during 1978 and 1979. I made it emphatically clear that I was willing to pay reasonable copying costs for the materials. My offer was generously waved aside by State Chair, M. Willey -- another indication that my requests were neither threatening or unreasonable.

I wish to point out that, as I explained to Maurice Willey, my aim in acquiring these documents was not to harm the Party but for possible use in a section of a book I am authoring which investigates the history of the Libertarian Party. As I told Mr. Willey, my aim is to base myself on objective, first-hand sources as much as possible. My existing collection of LPWS documents is already more than adequate to permit me to finish my work.

Since the present faction has been in power for nearly four years, I wanted to be sure to have a complete set of major documents. I do not want to misrepresent the present leadership but apparently its embarrassment is so great that it will not even permit me to see the outer garments of the Party. I should mention here that it was Maurice Willey who was gracious enough, in spite of our differences, to offer me copies of letters critical of his chairmanship of the Party. As far as I am concerned, Mr. Willey's candor is laudible and I had planned to credit him for it in my work. This was a case in which the moral medium was more important than the contentual message. I had hardly intended to indict the party

apparatus on the erstwhile criticisms and exhortations of its fervent supporters. My ideological interests, as is generally known, go far beyond the level of discourse permitted by the present party power structure and its intellectual ken.*

This is not the first time, of course, that the LPWS leadership's paranoid fear of competing ideas and intellectual criticism has led it to Stalinist-style authoritarianism. In 1977, the LPWS Board of Directors, at the behest of Pat Artz, frantically denied the Political Action Caucus admission to the so-called Northwest Regional Libertarian Conference. Under Artz's hysterical pressure, the LPWS board ruled that any involvement and admission of PAC members was to be permitted only under prior agreement to a self-imposed gag rule. As the price of admission, we were specifically prohibited from even discussing our ideas in casual conversation with other libertarians. After hearing this, we decided to boycott the Conference.

Obviously, the issue here is far greater than whether or not the Party has the prerogative to deny access to basic documents to me. The Party, as should be the case for all private organizations and individuals, has the moral right to reject any request for information or any other imposition in defense of its perceived interests. The question is not one of a violation of rights but one of moral impropriety and tactical weakness.

How can a political party which asserts itself to be the "party of principle" based on reasonable premises and devoted to individual liberty, expect to achieve its goals when it acts worse than an Orange County Republican Central Committee. As you well know, I am not a KGB or CIA agent or a nosey bureaucrat, but an active proponent of radical libertarianism and a long-time member of the Libertarian Party of Washington State. In spite of my criticisms of the Party, I have been active for many years. You have seen me on television, heard me on radio, read my statements in the press and -- if you had availed yourselves -- read my thoughts in dozens of underground publications and pamphlets. Your only basis for censuring and ostracizing me has, I suspect, nothing to do with any valid desire for the well-being of the Party but a fear of my potential criticisms. You cannot take the interplay of ideas. You not only have no interest in ideology, you actually fear it!

I must remind you of my warning to the Party printed in its newsletter (Reason and Liberty, April-May, 1977):

"The Libertarian Party of Washington State does not exist as an effective statewide political organization ... (but) as a glorified social club ... it promises to remain exactly the same. The

* As I promised over the phone, I am including several PAC documents as an act of generosity to Maurice Willey. He is welcome to exhibit these to the State Central Committee as evidence of my thought.

Coalition (Artz, Dymont, Kenney, Willey) which now controls the LPWS is basically the same insider group which has run things since the beginning. Their identifying characteristics have been lack of planning, study, and ideological precision. Actions, such as running for office, have been performed on a spur-of-the-moment ad hoc basis ... Everything is left for chance."

This appears to be exactly what has happened for the four years since I wrote this statement. It is easy to understand why you are so sensitive about divulging anything about the party and its workings. You have drawn an iron curtain around your ineffectual cabals and political failures. You have wasted the time, energy and money of many good innocents who trusted in your panaceas. Now, your only refuge is a Stalinist-style character assassination, and censorship.

I request that as a member of the LPWS, or at least as a past member of long standing, that my statement be published in the party newsletter. You have profoundly hurt me and denigrated my name with no authentic cause to do so. Let the membership of the LPWS have a chance to hear my defense against the charge that I am "the enemy of the Party". I also request a copy of the ruling and an explanation of the reasons presented in its defense.



Copies are being sent to the following persons and organizations:

ACLU
Australian Progress Party
Skip Barron
Nathaniel Branden
Cato Institute
Loretta Czap
Deb Das
Michael Dunn
Frontlines
Dr. J. Hospers
Inquiry
KING Broadcasting
KIRO Broadcasting
KOMO Broadcasting
Samuel Konkin
Emma Leyba

Libertarian Review
Roger MacBride
Dr. Tibor Machan
Namibian Christian Democratic Party
National LP Headquarters - Clark Campaign
National Review
Carl Nicolai
Open Road
Radical Caucus of the Libertarian Party
Dr. Murray Rothbard
Bear Sandahl
Seattle Sun
Seattle Post Intelligencer
Seattle Times
SIL

